

Message Text

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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0555

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES
OF NOV 9, 1976

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THE NOV 9 INFORMAL SESSION OF THE VIENNA TALKS, THE ALLIES WERE REPRESENTED BY ACTING CANADIAN REP PUDDINGTON, FRG REP AND US REP, AND THE EAST BY SOVIET REPS TARASOV AND SHUSTOV, GDR REP OESER AND CZECHOSLOVAK REP MEISNER. EASTERN REPS ONCE AGAIN FOCUSED ON CRITICISM OF THE WESTERN REFUSAL TO REDUCE AIR FORCES. BUT EASTERN REPS DID NOT ON THIS OCCASION MENTION RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUTURE F-15 DEPLOYMENTS.

2. WESTERN REPS EXPLAINED THAT, SINCE THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE EAST HAD REVISED ONLY THE TIMING OF THE REDUCTIONS IT HAS PROPOSED, MAKING NO REAL CHANGE IN THE QUANTITY OR NATURE OF THOSE REDUCTIONS OR IN THE COVERAGE OF RESULTING LIMITATIONS, AND THEREFORE NO CHANGE IN THE OUTCOME WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM

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THE EASTERN PROPOSALS. IN CONTRAST, IN ITS DEC 16 PROPOSALS,

THE WEST HAD ADDED SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE QUANTITY AND COVERAGE OF ITS REDUCTIONS AND TO THE COVERAGE OF THE LIMITATIONS WHICH IT HAD OFFERED. WESTERN REPS MADE CASE FOR FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES AND PRESENTED THE REASONS WHY THE WEST DID NOT ACCEPT EASTERN VIEW THAT AIR FORCES SHOULD BE REDUCED AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. THEY SHOWED HOW THE DEC 16 WESTERN PROPOSALS NEVERTHELESS MOVED TO A REASONABLE EXTENT TO MEET EASTERN CONCERNS CONCERNING AIR FORCES. THE MIXED-PACKAGE CONCEPT ENTAILED IN THESE PROPOSALS CONSTITUTED A REASONABLE COMPROMISE METHOD OF HANDLING THE OVERALL ISSUE OF REDUCTIONS OF BOTH MILITARY PERSONNEL AND ARMAMENTS. IT THEREFORE PROVIDED A PRACTICAL BASIS FOR AGREEMENT.

3. EASTERN REPS ATTACKED THE WESTERN ASSERTION OF THE COMPROMISE NATURE OF DEC 16 PROPOSALS, CLAIMING THAT THESE PROPOSALS MADE NO MOVE TOWARDS THE EASTERN POSITION ON MAJOR REDUCTION ISSUES. THEY MADE CASE FOR COMPROMISE CHARACTER OF EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL AND FOR THE CONCEPT OF REDUCTION BY UNITS. EASTERN PARTICIPANTS DID NOT REFER TO EARLIER PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A LIST OF POINTS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT.

4. TARASOV OPENED SESSION WITH ARGUMENTATION CLOSELY CONTESTING POINTS MADE BY WESTERN REPS IN PREVIOUS SESSION TO EFFECT THAT THE MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH WAS AN ACCEPTABLE WAY OF BRIDGING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE POSITIONS OF BOTH SIDES WITH REGARD TO REDUCTION OF PERSONNEL AND ARMAMENTS. HE CLAIMED THE WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSAL WAS NOT A REAL COMPROMISE AND THAT IT DID NOT MOVE TOWARDS EASTERN VIEWS TOWARDS REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS BY ALL THOSE HOLDING THEM. THE US, WHILE ACCEPTING LIMITATIONS ON THE NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS REDUCED, COULD BUILD UP OTHER NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS IN ITS POSSESSION, AS COULD ITS ALLIES.

5. FRG REP EMPHASIZED THAT THE OUTCOME OF REDUCTION PROPOSALS WAS THEIR MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL MADE NO CHANGE IN THE OUTCOME OF ORIGINAL EASTERN REDUCTION PROPOSALS, WHEREAS THE WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS HAD MADE AN IMPORTANT CHANGE IN THE WESTERN POSITION IN THIS REGARD.

6. CZECHOSLOVAK REP ATTACKED WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS AS EFFORT TO GAIN UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE FOR THE WEST. HE CLAIMED FEB 19 EASTERN PROPOSAL WAS A GENUINE COMPROMISE. HE ADVANCED IN SUPPORT

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OF THIS CLAIM THE ARGUMENT THAT THE EAST HAD TAKEN THE WESTERN DEC 16 PROPOSALS FOR US NUCLEAR WITHDRAWALS AS A MODEL AND DID NOT EXCEED THEM IN QUANTITY BUT RATHER HAD MATCHED THEM AS TO AMOUNT AND TYPE. HE CLAIMED EASTERN FEB 19 PROPOSAL WAS FULLY ADEQUATE RESPONSE TO DEC 16 WESTERN PROPOSALS, SO IT WAS NOW THE TURN OF THE WEST TO RESPOND.

7. CANADIAN REP MADE CASE FOR WESTERN FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES,

BECAUSE OF THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF GROUND FORCES IN THE MILITARY SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND BECAUSE OF THE DESTABILIZING EFFECT OF THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF GROUND FORCES IN THE REDUCTION AREA.

8. GDR REP COMPLAINED THAT THE WEST WAS CONTINUING TO SPEAK OF DISPARITIES WITHOUT ADVANCING ANY PROOF OF THESE DISPARITIES AND WITHOUT EVEN TABLING ITS DATA ON MANPOWER. HE SAID THE METHOD OF REDUCTIONS HAD TO BE THE SAME FOR BOTH SIDES AND SHOULD BE IN THE FORM OF ENTIRE MILITARY UNITS. HOWEVER, SINCE SIZES OF FORMATIONS DIFFERED ON BOTH SIDES, A DIFFERENT NUMBER OF FORMATIONS MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN REDUCTIONS BY EACH SIDE.

9. US REP PRESENTED WESTERN CASE WHY THE WEST DID NOT ACCEPT THE CONCEPT THAT AIR FORCES MUST BE REDUCED AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER, THE WESTERN MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH DID MEET EASTERN CONCERNS AS REGARDS AIR FORCES THROUGH REDUCTION OF 54 US NUCLEAR-CAPABLE F-4 AIRCRAFT AND THE COMBINED COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING WHICH, FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES, WOULD CONSTRAIN AIR FORCE MANPOWER. THE MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH ALSO CONSTITUTED THE ONLY PRACTICAL BASIS FOR THE PROBLEM OF REDUCING ARMAMENTS IN GENERAL SINCE IT WOULD BE NEITHER EQUITABLE NOR PRACTICAL TO ATTEMPT TO APPLY AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD LIMITATION TO EACH TYPE OF MAJOR ARMAMENT HELD BY BOTH SIDES IN THE AREA, AS THE EAST HAD PROPOSED.

10. IN HOUR-LONG ENSUING DEBATE, TARASOV SOUGHT TO MAKE THE CASE THAT SINCE THE WEST WAS NOT PROPOSING A SPECIFIC LIMIT ON AIR FORCE MANPOWER, IF THE WESTERN COMBINED COMMON CEILING PROPOSAL WENT INTO EFFECT, THE WEST COULD BUILD UP ITS AIR FORCES, AT THE EXPENSE OF GROUND FORCES, AND GAIN IN FIREPOWER TO THE DETRIMENT OF EASTERN SECURITY. WESTERN REPS POINTED OUT THAT THE WEST WOULD NOT CONTRACTUALIZE THE LARGE EASTERN
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NUMERICAL ADVANTAGE IN AIRCRAFT IN THE REDUCTION AREA AND THAT MOBILITY OF AIRCRAFT IN MOVING TO THE AREA OR ATTACKING TARGETS WITHIN IT FURTHER JUSTIFIED FOCUS ON GROUND FORCES. TARASOV NONETHELESS RETURNED TO THE POINT, CLAIMING WESTERN PROPOSALS WOULD PERMIT AN INCREASE IN WESTERN AIR FORCES.

END SUMMARY.

REMAINDER OF REPORT SENT VIA AIRGRAM.RESOR

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